

# Developer Communications Guidance



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# Introduction for Developers

Dear Developer

Essex County Council is dedicated to improving Essex and the lives of our residents. Our ambition is to deliver the best quality of life in Britain and we will achieve this by providing high-quality, targeted services that deliver real value for money.

Our extensive road and footway network is a critical part of our service responsibility. As the Highways Authority we are responsible for working with a range of partners to ensure that our highways infrastructure is designed, constructed, maintained and improved in ways that benefit Essex residents, businesses and road users.

As a developer adding to the Essex built environment, it is assumed that you will want to connect your private development to our public network by building agreed links, probably involving roadworks at various stages. Roadworks and changes to road layouts often generate public interest and concern, before, during and even after the construction period. This is particularly true where the proposed works are in a sensitive area or where work could create possible congestion or other inconvenience.

**Early, easy to understand and clear communications will help you deliver your scheme in ways that minimise local misunderstanding and inconvenience and protect and enhance your reputation, that of Essex County Council and any other organisation involved.** Essex Highways has therefore produced this pack to help guide developers in your communications with residents and other key stakeholders for schemes where you or associated third parties are working on the highway.

**Please read through this guide at an early stage in your construction planning process**, considering how you can use the guidance, tools and techniques to communicate appropriately to people who may be affected considering the scale, nature, impact and timeline of your development. Essex Highways Development Management team are available to guide you, so if you have questions, please contact us to discuss things.

Thank you for working with us to ensure your scheme is effectively introduced, explained and communicated.

**Development Management team**

**Highways**

Ringway Jacobs | Essex County Council

# General Principles

The keys to effective communications are knowing:

- what information you need to share
- who to inform
- when to inform –well in advance is best
- the best (most effective, efficient and economical) way to communicate
- how to respond to enquiries and concerns

For some schemes, it may be very simple, straightforward and easy to carry out. However other schemes may need more thought and planning, to deliver communications that help local people and road users understand what is going on and help them to cope with the inconvenience. Engagement between a developer and the Highways Development Management team should start early on in the project so that you can identify the stakeholders and put a robust communications plan into place.

<i>Key to abbreviations used in this guide:</i>	
<i>DM</i>	<i>Development Management</i>
<i>DME</i>	<i>Development Management Engineer</i>
<i>Dev</i>	<i>Developer</i>
<i>ECC</i>	<i>Essex County Council</i>
<i>TTRO</i>	<i>Temporary traffic regulation order</i>

# Checklist for developers and Development Management team

The following checklist has been provided for use by developers and the Development Management team in helping to plan communications. This should be used in conjunction with the templates and advice which can be found by clicking on the links. Some actions have been included which are for internal ECC use only. These are marked in **red**. Each of these actions is explained further in this guide.

	<b>Action</b> <i>Important note: This guidance is correct at the time of publication, but should be verified with the relevant parties as protocol and practices are subject to change.</i>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
1	Develop Stakeholder Communications Plan and identify key stakeholders.	Dev/DME	
2	Prepare <a href="#">Briefing Note for Cabinet Office</a> . (ECC internal use only)	DME	
3	Prepare <a href="#">Letters for affected residents and businesses</a> and identify distribution area.	Dev/DME	
4	Inform other key stakeholders such as <a href="#">bus operators</a> if there will be an impact to a bus route. (Note: at least 56 days' notice is required.) Other stakeholders such as emergency services and schools must also be informed, where necessary.	Dev/DME	
5	Apply for <a href="#">Temporary Traffic Regulation Order</a> (if necessary).	Dev	
6	Prepare <a href="#">Web text for Highways website</a> with clear site plans and frequently asked questions where necessary. (DME to forward to Highways communications team.)	Dev/DME	
7	Prepare draft <a href="#">Press Release</a> to promote scheme. (DME to forward to Comms team.)	Dev/DME	
8	Prepare <a href="#">Email briefing</a> for customer services/ district and parish councillors (ECC internal use only)	DME	
9	<a href="#">Drawings / plans</a>	Dev	
10	<a href="#">Frequently asked questions</a> (FAQs)	Dev	
11	<a href="#">Posters</a>	Dev	
12	Street notices	Dev	
13	<a href="#">Information boards</a>	Dev	
14	Complete application for <a href="#">DM Road Opening Form</a>	Dev	
15	Road Opening Event protocol (ECC internal use only)	DME	

# Stakeholder engagement plan

**All** developer schemes must have relevant and appropriate supporting public facing communications plans. For a small scheme it can be simple; large schemes may need more complex planning and resourcing. While the communications methods for the distribution of the messages for any given scheme or programme will vary depending on timing and scale, **all planned works should have supporting communications in advance of their delivery.**

All elements of communications for works should include the following key messages:

- What is planned - type of works and delivery
- Assumed positive outcomes of the works (benefits)
- Dates and times of works (including anticipated duration, start and end dates)
- Likely disruption from the works (for example; congestion, nightworks, road closures, access restrictions to properties, long diversions, noise, dust etc.)
- Precautions to the works (safety messages)
- Overall responsibility for the works
- Who should be contacted in case of urgency and for general enquiries

Negative aspects of a scheme should be clearly identified and owned by the developer and any delivery contractor together with accompanying advice to help mitigate the impact on residents, road users and so on.

Night works can be the subject of contentious feelings from the local community where they take place. Most often, this is because night works are often accompanied by noise and/or light pollution issues.

In some locations, the nature of the works or traffic sensitive roads may dictate that the work be done during the evening/night to minimise congestion. Night working allows longer working windows, thereby enabling the work to be completed more efficiently than daytime working. If night works are agreed, they should be explained and people should be informed in advance.

Key stakeholders should be identified and the method and timing of communications should be planned and agreed between the developer and the DME.

Examples of possible stakeholders for any given scheme could include any or all of the groups listed below. No matter the size of the development, this list should be considered to ensure key groups to communicate with are identified.

County Cabinet members, local MP, relevant local county, district, city, town, parish councillors	Media (newspapers & news websites; local radio; TV etc)	Local Residents
Relevant neighbouring local authorities	Transport providers (bus operators, trains, airports, taxis, ports, hauliers etc.)	Land owners
Emergency services (ambulance, air ambulance, police, fire & rescue, coastguard etc.)	Shops & businesses (incl. late night/early hours businesses)	Farming community
Education (Schools, colleges, etc.)	Environment and heritage organisations	Non-motorised users (Ramblers, horse societies etc.)
Health services (hospitals, GPs, clinics)	Tourism sites / Events organisers	Economic development (Chamber of Commerce/Enterprise partnerships)
Sport centres, clubs, associations, religious establishments	Community groups	Disabled user groups

Internal use only

## Briefing Note for Cabinet Office

The DME will need to brief the local Essex County Council Member about the work in advance. [See the example provided.](#)

## Letters to residents / businesses

The communications process must consider the needs of local residents and businesses. Residents and businesses will require clear statements of fact. Ideally, letters will be only one page long with a supporting document, e.g. a diversion map and written in straightforward language, with no technical jargon where possible.

Messages for a scheme should not offer any opinion, or open up topics for debate or consultation. Messages should convey clearly and accurately what will happen and explain how people should manage through the duration of the works.

**Letters should be delivered to the frontages of all homes and businesses impacted by the works preferably no less than 2 weeks before the work starts.**

Consideration should be given to which dwellings and businesses should be included in any communications.

Sometimes the impact of the development may dictate a requirement for wider communication, say 50 metres behind the frontage, or for several hundred metres around.

Other means of communicating the nature and impact of the works should be considered including social media, press notices, websites etc.

## Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders

Sometimes it may be necessary for you to apply for a temporary traffic regulation order (TTRO). This is a legal order which enables the county council, as the highway authority, to manage traffic in the county. We would use it when it is necessary to temporarily stop or limit vehicular and/or pedestrian traffic along the highway. This is often necessary on large developments where work needs to be carried out next to the highway. TTROs can be applied to roads, footways or Public Rights of Way (PRoWs).

More information on how to apply for a TTRO, along with the application form can be found on the [Highways website](#). In particular, please consider the likely impact on the emergency services; local deliveries to businesses; local transport providers, including taxi firms; haulage operators; and bus and school bus operators, as outlined in the Stakeholder Engagement plan.

## Bus operators

**Bus operators must be informed if the development or road closures will impact on a bus route, including temporarily moving bus stops.** This is primarily because they have a legal obligation (under the Transport Act 1985) to run services according to a registered timetable. At least 56 days' notice is required if they want to change a route, otherwise they can be fined by the Traffic Commissioner. Exceptions to this are for emergencies or relatively short road closures.

However, operators also have an obligation to meet their service requirements and other regulations which makes their operation vulnerable to unplanned or short notice road closures or diversions. It is advisable to contact the bus operators directly at the earliest possible opportunity to give them as much notice as possible. A link to the list of bus operators and their contact details can be found on the [Highways website](#).

# Other key stakeholders briefing

Where other key stakeholders have been identified, it is the responsibility of the developer to contact them via telephone, email or other means, as necessary.

Examples of other stakeholders could include any of the following who could be impacted by the works:

## Web text

As a general rule, Essex Highways would consider putting information on their website if the scheme will have a major impact on the existing road network, for example where there will be delays due to road works or road closures.

It is the responsibility of the DME with guidance from Communications team to decide if a web page is needed. The DME and the Developer should jointly agree on the wording which should be passed to the Highways Communications team to post on the Highways website. It is important that this information on the website remains current – updates should be provided to the Communications team as the scheme progresses, including scheme dates, closure dates, progress, photos etc. [See the example provided.](#)

## Press Release

A press release may be needed if it is likely to be helpful to residents, road users, ECC and the developer. It is the responsibility of the DME with guidance from the Comms team to decide if a press release is needed prior to, and/or during the works. The DME and the Developer should jointly agree the proposed wording which should be passed to the Highways Communications team for issuance by ECC Communications team. [See the example provided.](#)

Internal use only

## Briefing for customer services / city, borough, district and parish councils

This takes the form of an email and is the responsibility of the DME to inform these stakeholders early on in the project and with updates where necessary. [See the example provided.](#)

# Drawings/plans of schemes / diversion routes

Drawings should be supplied by the developer and agreed with the DME. The drawings should be easy to understand by the public and must include the appropriate copyright notice. [See the example provided.](#) Drawings provided should not be branded with Essex County Council or Ringway Jacobs logos – only the developer's.

## FAQs

A list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) is sometimes issued with residents' letters or for website use where the scheme may warrant it. It should be determined in the initial communications planning phase early on. [See the example provided.](#)

## Posters

We encourage the use of posters where it is felt that this would benefit the local community and passers-by (for example, where there are road closures). This is at the discretion of the DM\_Engineer. They are often posted in rail stations, local shops, businesses and some district/parish councils. Permission to display them should be sought in advance by the developer, from the relevant owner. [See the example provided.](#)

## Road Information boards

Information boards are required to be installed on site 2 weeks in advance of the works. The location and detail of the signs is to be agreed with the DM Engineer. [See the example provided.](#)

## Development Management statutory Road Opening Notice

If you have any works being carried out on a new development within the existing highway only, under a Section 38, Section 278 or a Works Permit using the Highways Act 1980 then you will need to process your scheme with the Project Engineer/Technician allocated to you from the Development Management team, but

at some point the person undertaking the works will also need to apply for a Road Opening Notice under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991.

The form needed for this is called the Development Management Road Opening Notice form (see link to form below).

It is a good idea to approach your Streetworks Co-ordinator (see below) early on in the implementation of your project to plan your works accordingly and establish a realistic timescale.

# How to Process a Road Opening Notice

The following information is mandatory for this process:

1. What are the works you plan to carry out and how long are they expected to take? Please see the table below for timescales and notice periods required:

<b>Minor Notice</b>	3 working days	Requires 3 working days' notice
<b>Standard Notice</b>	Up to 10 days	Requires 10 working days' notice
<b>Major Works</b>	3 months	Requires 3 months' notice, followed by a 10 day notice before the start date which will have the actual start date

2. Have you spoken to a Streetworks Co-ordinator? Please see the table below to find your nearest contact:

<b>Districts covered</b>	<b>Streetworks Co-ordinator</b>
Braintree, Colchester, Maldon, Tendring	Mr Glen Sparrow <a href="mailto:glenn.sparrow@essexhighways.org">glenn.sparrow@essexhighways.org</a>
Castlepoint, Chelmsford, Rochford, Uttlesford	Mr Paul Livesey <a href="mailto:paul.livesey@essexhighways.org">paul.livesey@essexhighways.org</a>
Basildon, Braintree, Epping Forest, Harlow	Mr Ray White <a href="mailto:raymond.white@essexhighways.org">raymond.white@essexhighways.org</a>

3. Have all the appropriate information/documents/drawings been submitted to a Development Management Project Engineer? (Traffic Management Plan, Confirmation of a £10 million Public Liability Insurance, NRSWA Supervisor and Operatives Streetworks cards.)

## Complete the Road Opening Notice form

To ensure you are using the latest Development Management Road Opening Notice application form it is recommended that you download it from the [Highways website](#).

The form also includes guidance for developers on how to complete the application.

# ECC protocol for ceremonially opening a road

(Important note: This information is correct at the time of publication. However, DM\_Engineer should liaise with Essex County Council Cabinet Office well in advance of organising the event.)

As well as the statutory processes outlined in previous sections, ECC has specific public relations protocol for highways opening events. If there is a desire to hold an event, the ECC Cabinet Office for Highways needs to be informed as early in the planning as possible – ideally 3 months before. Below is an example of the protocol that may be specified, although this is subject to change as each event would be treated on an individual basis.

As a general rule, the following would be invited:

- Chairman of Essex County Council (as First Citizen of Essex)
- Essex County Council Cabinet Member/s – generally always the Cabinet Member for Highways; possibly also including others as relevant
- The Local County Councillor (in case of an urban area might include several that are connected)
- A senior Ringway Jacobs representative – such as Contract Director or Head of Design
- Representatives from ECC and RJ Communications team – to manage the event and handle any media
- The Contractor(s) who have worked on the build

At an opening, the sequence of events would be as follows:

The ECC Chairman should always be the first to speak as he/she will do the 'Welcome to Essex' part, followed by the Cabinet Member speaking on the subject matter and, if a religious Minister is present, then he/she would speak. A Developer's representative could then speak. The actual opening is performed by the Chairman or with the Minister.

# Contacts and information links for developers

Email for Development Management team:

[development.management@essexhighways.org](mailto:development.management@essexhighways.org)

Essex highways website:

[www.essex.gov.uk/highways](http://www.essex.gov.uk/highways)

Roadwork website:

[www.roadworks.org](http://www.roadworks.org)

Essex bus operators contact list:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Bus/Bus-operators.aspx>

Apply for a TTRO:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Applications/For-contractors/Temporary-Traffic-Regulation-Order.aspx>

Apply for a DM Road Opening Notice:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/transport-and-roads/Highway-Schemes-and-Developments/adoptions-and-land/dm-road-opening-notice.aspx>

Find out who your Streetworks Co-ordinator is:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Highway-Schemes-and-Developments/Adoptions-and-Land/Road-Opening-Notice.aspx>

Information and technical guides for Developers on our website:

<http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Highway-Schemes-and-Developments/Adoptions-and-Land.aspx>